

TO MIDIA.

In that dear country which men call,  
With summer phrases, "our pretty face,"  
There is no spring, there is no fall,  
And biting winter finds no place.  
One light, one warmth, one tender air,  
One endless summer harbors there.

In that dear country, side by side,  
There be two placid lakes that sleep,  
Where worth a kingdom to divide  
Each gay, unfathomable deep,  
And daring all things to possess  
The secrets of your soul's recess.

In other lands 'tis passing sweet  
To watch the whispering western wind  
Go ruffling all the whitened wheat  
Nor leave the faintest track behind,  
To see the wanton wavelets rear  
Their crests along the grassy mere.

So does the zephyr of your smile  
Lead on its fairy footed dance  
From end to end of that dear isle  
And dimples all the fair expanse,  
And stops its course and floats and flies  
In ripples o'er your laughing eyes.  
—Fall Mail Budget

A CHANGED CRITIC.

Mr. Aubrey Everdene looked out upon Sackville street and yawned. Only an instant before he had written "finis" to a magazine article with a dash of the pen across the last sheet, and now the MSS. lay ready for the post among the debris of printer's proofs, new novels awaiting review, etc., with which the writing table was strewn.

One of the best known litterateurs in London and a brilliant conversationist, his tongue could be as scathing as his pen, and it was said of him, with regard to the latter weapon of warfare, that in half a dozen polished sentences he could do more toward damning a book than any two of his compeers. A big, loosely made man was Mr. Everdene, with shrewd gray eyes and the pessimism of a modern. Studying his face as he lounged by the window, his hands in the pockets of his smoking jacket, one could see that he had a lively sense of humor combined with his other characteristics and understood the interest his personality aroused.

Presently a servant brought him a visiting card on a salver.  
"The lady would be obliged if you would grant her an interview, sir."  
"Lady Hilyard," muttered Everdene, reading the inscription. "I can't recall the name. Both the woman! What does she want? However, ask her to come up, Blake."

When she entered, a fair, elegant woman of perhaps 25, in an irreproachable Parisian toilet, he was still more convinced that he had not the privilege of her acquaintance.

"Mr. Aubrey Everdene?" she queried.  
"Mr. Everdene bowed."  
"Pray take a seat, madame."  
"No," she said. "I have come to quarrel with you, and I don't sit down in the houses of my enemies!"  
"To quarrel with me!" His eyebrows went up. The thought came to him that his visitor was not in her right mind.

"Yes. Perhaps I had better explain myself at once. I am the author of 'Fashion and Footlights.'"  
Mr. Everdene, standing perforce because she would, pulled his mustache, while the fair stranger tapped her No. 3 shoe on the carpet with impatience and looked pitchforks and daggers.

"Fashion and Footlights," he reflected aloud. "Fashion and Footlights." Ha!

Comprehension stole over his face and with it a slight amusement. He fished among a pile of volumes and brought out three bound with an elegance destined to win the hearts of suburban circulating libraries.

"Here it is. Reviewed it in The Centurion, didn't it?"  
"No," she said, "you hanged and quartered it!"

"I am sorry. May I ask how you found out that I was the culprit?"  
"Oh, by accident. It's a long story and unimportant, since you don't deny the imputation. Now, Mr. Everdene, I know it is very impertinent of me, a stranger, to come to your private address and worry you. I am doing a very unusual thing, I am afraid, and Mrs. Grundy would be horrified. But 'fools rush in,' you know, and widows are privileged. You must have a little patience with me because"—for the first time her lips relaxed, and she smiled a smile that was sweetness itself—"well, just because I'm a woman and you're a gentleman. Acknowledge the truth, now, on your honor. Don't you think you were unnecessarily harsh to my poor little literary effort?"

"No," he said bluntly. "I always give my true opinion of things, and I consider your book had many faults."

If she had been a man, he would have said, "I thought it was—bad," with the brusqueness of conviction and probably declined to discuss the matter, but to a lady it was impossible to be rude. He regarded her absurdly unconventional presence with a tolerant kindness.

"Of course, I admit that there are faults, but upon one or two points in your criticism I cannot agree with you. I should very much like to discuss them with you. May I?"

"Certainly. His mouth was twitching under his heavy mustache. "But don't you think, pending the verdict, that you had better sit down? You will be fatigued. If you'll permit me to wheel this armchair nearer the fire for you—so!"

Having carefully arranged it so that she should face the light, he seated himself opposite her—the A. B. C. of diplomacy, but she did not appear to notice it. She was drawing arabesques on the carpet with the point of her ivory handled umbrella.

"I should very much like to know," she said, "what you think of my coming here?"

"I think you are plucky—yes, and recklessly unconventional."

"Candid, at any rate! And I like that." She looked up. "Now for the first indictment on the list, Mr. Everdene. You accuse me of improbability. I deny it."

His manner bordered on preoccupation. In truth, he was thinking what wonderful lashes she had, and how be-

coming a flush of excitement could be to a clear, pale skin.

"You assert," she continued warmly, "that it is ridiculous to suppose that a man and woman of the world could fall in love at first sight, as I make my hero and heroine do, and that such proceedings are limited to boys and girls in their teens and the pages of penny fiction. I should have thought that Mr. Aubrey Everdene would have shown wider sympathies."

"Then you really believe, Lady Hilyard, that adult, sensible people conceive such abrupt attachments?"

"I am convinced that it happens frequently."

"Oh, come, not frequently?"

"Well, sometimes," she amended. "I could give you a dozen instances."

He lacked the heart to argue with her. It would have been like breaking a butterfly on a wheel. And, after all, there might be more sentiment in the de siècle humanity than he thought. Women have wonderful intuition in these matters.

"Well, suppose we let that slide for the moment and proceed to indictment No. 2. What other phrase of mine do you take exception to?"

"You said that I had not the remotest idea of construction, and that 'Fashion and Footlights' was evidently a specimen of that objectionable class of fiction which you regretted to see growing so prevalent—the amateur novel, born of vanity and a lack of wholesome occupation."

Her voice died away with a tremor. He had only stated the truth, but that fact did not prevent the speechless Mr. Everdene from feeling as if he had committed a particularly brutal murder and the ghost of the victim had come to arraign him before all the people whose opinions he valued most.

"I—I cried," she murmured pathetically.

Her lips quivered. Beads of perspiration rose to the man's forehead.

"Good heavens, if I had only guessed how much I should hurt you! It was harsh, monstrous. No doubt I was in a bad temper, and your unfortunate book was the first thing that afforded me an opportunity to vent my spleen."

Lady Hilyard applied six square inches of cambric and lace to the corner of an eyelid.

"If you'll only believe me, my dear Lady Hilyard, when I tell you that I'm sorrier than I can say."

"Then you acknowledge that you were needlessly cruel?"

"I was brutal." He would have committed blacker perjury as she wiped that tear away.

"And that I had just cause for indignation?"

"You were perfectly right."

A smile broke like April sunshine over her face.

"In that case, I suppose I must forgive you."

He was ridiculously grateful. He heaved a sigh of relief and hesitated, with his hand on the button of the electric bell.

"Lady Hilyard, you know the Arab custom of taking salt with one's friends? As a token of good will permit me to give you the prosaic English equivalent of a cup of tea."

The offer was tempting, the room was hot, and she had talked a great deal. She yielded—and more. When the refreshments came, accompanied by wonderful sweetmeats from Bond street round the corner, she asked permission to pour it out for him with a winning graciousness which charmed him. It afforded him an odd sense of pleasure, too, to see her white fingers moving about the china. He was unaccustomed to the presence of women in his home.

With the Japanese table between them, they chatted for awhile, and then the clock on the mantelpiece struck 6. She rose, with a pretty gesture of dismay, like a second Cinderella. "Do you know, Mr. Everdene, that I have been a whole hour wasting your valuable time?"

"I thought it had been 30 minutes," he answered, "and the pleasantest time of my life."

"Very pretty!" she said, blushing faintly. "And, in return for it, let me tell you my address is on my card, and that my 'day' is Thursday. Also I must thank you very heartily for your kindness and courtesy to an impertinent intruder. Very few men would have been so considerate."

"Please don't thank me. It is I who owe you a debt of gratitude. You have taught me something I never expected to learn."

"What?"

"That the conduct of your hero and heroine was not improbable at all."

Their eyes met. The woman's dropped, self-conscious, pleased.

"You really mean that?"

"On my soul, I do."

The most delicious softness was in his voice.

"It makes me so proud and happy to think I have convinced you."

There was a silence. She smoothed a wrinkle in her snood glove. He twisted a button on his coat. Then she arched herself, with a little laugh, and extended her hand.

"Well, goodby, Mr. Everdene, and once more, thank you."

He pressed her fingers ever so lightly—her prosclyte.

"Not 'goodby,'" he murmured. "Au revoir."—Black and White.

Peas in a Pod.

S. M. Andree, a Swedish scientist, has collected tabular information showing the average weight of peas in their pods. The lightest peas were always found near the ends of the pod. The average weight of a pea was greater the larger the number of peas in the pod, so that the largest pods contained the heaviest peas. The weight of the peas next the point of the pod increased with the increased number of peas in the pod. With the exception of the first and last pea there was but a very small difference in the weight of the peas in the same pod.

Bigamy is only a misdemeanor, not a crime, according to the laws of New Jersey.



COL. THOMAS G. LAWLER.  
Col. Thomas G. Lawler, of Rockford, Ill., who was recently elected Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, was born in Liverpool, England, in 1844 and came to this country with his parents when a child. At 17 he went to the front with the Nineteenth Illinois Infantry and fought throughout the war.

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